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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version  
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Shingjergji, A. (2014). Psycho-Motor Education of the Pre-School Children - A Possibility for Qualitative Training. *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences*, 17, 74-80. <https://doi.org/10.18052/www.scipress.com/ILSHS.17.74>

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# Psycho-motor education of the pre-school children - a possibility for qualitative training

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## ABSTRACT

The present-day vigorous development of the scientific thought preconditions a directed and time-bound intervention into different fields of education for new generations as an immediate problem, beginning from the pre-school age, which the stage when the organized education starts. In these terms, the aim of this writing is to bring some qualitative training alternatives into the readers' attention, based on the theoretical-didactic references in the field of the pre-school children's psychomotor education. Also, by shedding light on the features and the elusiveness the children of this age bear, regarding motoric abilities, education and evolvement - seen as integrated with other fields of cognition, we are trying to bring forth some instances or models from the curricula and teaching sessions, urged by the desire to contribute to the preparation of the pre-school education teachers and students methodic activities in the domain of psychomotor education.

**Keywords:** education; psychomotor; physical development; motor behaviors; motoric culture

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The pre-school education in Albania constitutes the first hook of our education system. Actually, this stage is represented by a unified system of the public kindergartens with 3-6 years old children, as well as private education which, beyond first hesitations, is prone to fast development.

The high percentage of the 3-6 years old children enrolled in pre-school institutions in most of the European countries (up to 100 % in France, 90 % in England, Holland and Belgium etc.), makes us reflect about the low level of the children's enrollment and presence in the Albanian pre-school institutions (only 70 %).

In this aspect, alongside children's access, participation and progress, the curricula and achievements have a first-hand importance. The curricula offered by these institutions serve to provide the public with a variety of education alternatives regarding both the children and family needs. The content of the curricula as well as the aims of different activities (inside and outside the institutions) play an important role into the dissemination of the prerequisites for the pre-school education institutions or their non dissemination thereof.

According to the latest studies, even though the indicators of children's attendance into the pre-school institutions is low as compared to that of the developed European countries, satisfying results have been achieved in terms of improvements into the pre-school children

education curricula and the establishment of the contemporary standards. To this regard and differently from some years ago when the public institutions have been conservative toward accepting changes, at present they have been transformed into centers of absorbing the progressive elements and models suchlike, the 'Step by step', 'Rexhio Emilia' 'Montesori' 'Frobel' etc.

The adaptation of the up-mentioned models into our pre-school system has greatly enriched the latter, by providing new abilities and possibilities in terms of subject integration and contemporary methodologies, the education pedagogy, involvement of the parents in and out of the school activities, as well as into the organization and management of these institutions.

## **2. PSYCHOMOTOR EDUCATION – AN ASPECT OF THE PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN'S FORMATION**

"The education main goal, according to Piaget, is to create people who are able to do new things and not simply repeating what the past generations have done, people who are creative, inventors and explorers. The second goal of education is to shape minds which can be critical, creating per se' and not accepting everything that has been offered to them"

The present-day tendencies of the scientific thinking development urge the need to intervene to the various fields of younger generation education in the due time, beginning from the pre-school age in which the organized education begins.

Nowadays, various debates have been evolving in support to these tendencies, regarding the proper shaping of the contemporary teaching methodologies and techniques to be applied with the pre-school children, interdependent to their psychological, physical, motoric and social-economic features.

In the rest of this writing we are dealing with some of the issues consisting of our main interest regarding the psychomotor education of the pre-school children in our institutions, (even referring to the contemporary experience), as well as opinions and suggestions to improve our work for the preparation of the pre-school students and teachers. It is important to be emphasized the fact that teaching children has no more been considered as a process in which the teacher transmits knowledge to the student and the latter acquire what has been transmitted to but as a process of collaboration and research among children with each-other and with the adults around them, a process which is led by the teacher. The child, which by nature is prone to grow up and learn, is both the object and the subject of the educational and teaching process, being in its very center.

The essence of the pedagogical mastery lies in the fact that teachers should search and practice methods and techniques requiring less explanation but create a vaster space for the children's activation and learning, creating learning ambiances where there is less confusion, less unnecessary anxiety and fatigue and more attention, satisfaction and acquisition of the knowledge and wants for children.

Regarding the psychomotor education in the Albanian pre-school education system, we should accept the fact that this kind of education is relatively less known for our children, making up a gap in this field. The reason laying behind this fact is that this kind of education requires too qualified preparation, mastery of the contemporary techniques and methodologies and displays difficulties in application. Children of this age display a lot of deficiencies, especially regarding motoric experiences which impacts not only the motoric aspect but even their spiritual, social and intellectual development one. It is for this reason that through the

psychomotor education the teachers should realize with children three main duties which make up the very basis of the modern philosophy:

**a. *Setting up a realist physical and motoric culture***, which means that the psychomotor education cannot be simply defined as a “pure psychomotor development” neither can it be defined as “pre-sportive culture”. The aim of education during this cycle of life is that children are offered possibilities to build a real physical and motoric culture so that they efficiently and surely preserve and apply it during all the course of their lives.

**b. *Linking the bodily posture with language expressions*** which means that the bodily posture impacts the children’s abilities to formulate communicate and estimate their motoric “responses”. The link between body posture and language makes up the impacting process leading children to efficient, conscious and sustainable motoric responses.

**c. *Ensuring a close link between physical and motoric development, the school and society ambience.***

- In the level of physical and motoric development this kind of education ensures an improvement into the physiological and muscle functions as well as in the cardio-respiratory, neural and motoric ones.
- In the school level it ensures the alternation of the school activity with the concrete sorts of teaching, the teaching techniques and the knowledge provided at this institution.
- In the social level it ensures building concrete rapports relevant to the collective life rules.

### **3. THE PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES AND COMPETENCES OF THE PRE-SCHOOL PSYCHOMOTOR EDUCATION CURRICULA**

The pre-school children psychomotor education curricula should not be “a filtration” of incomparable identification of the children’s features. It should determine the list of the necessary competences the children should achieve in any level of their development. Always in reference to the world experiences, the teacher in the pre-school children’s education should continuously transmit their theoretical knowledge into the “purification filter” aiming to present and contrast their knowledge before practicing them with children. This entails the following references:

#### **3. 1. Institutional references**

Institutional references should be realistic, helpful and leading ones, in order to promote, organize and estimate the children’s attitudes during the planned lessons to be taught. In order to realize them we should rely on the following elements:

- Organization of the Pre-school Education.
- The exact determination of the competences, (achievements, standards), the children should achieve at the end of the school cycle.
- The progress of teaching (the teaching methodology and techniques) as function of their development level and rates.
- The active participation of children in the teaching-learning process which leads into an increase in their behavior, self-estimation and performance autonomy.

### 3. 2. Theoretical references

These references are organized in the three following poles:

Teaching – development – interaction between the body and language.

A further question may be asked: what to purport children via the teaching subjects?

And the answer is: “things” they can realize easily, by since their first “hit”, or “assignments” placing them into the instant position of difficulty which can be passed by the help by another person (classmate, adult).

“Trade teaching” according to Vygotsky and Brunner should be active in the development of the children, wakening processes into them, processes which would not be visible without this “placement under compulsion”

Both the school function and originality ensure the development of the optimal development zone considered as an expression of the potential character which cannot be shown by the child without the enhancement of a third person (teacher or classmate).

To this regard everything should be respected in children: their intellectual, motoric, linguistic, sensory and social development level, as well as their features in rapport with the world.

#### 3. 2. 1. Interaction between the motoric and linguistic activities

The bodily activity constitutes a significant indicator motivating the child to express and communicate his motoric behaviors (racing, results, feelings and emotions). This continuous interaction between motoric and the linguistic activity is a source of progress to the child, both in the aspect of linguistic enrichment and in the effective increase of his motoric behaviors. In general, three-years-old children have very limited possibilities to their autonomous (independent) and correct reaction toward verbal (oral) directions. Actually they can follow solely simple verbal enhancements as for example: “catch me” “take the ball”, “sit down”, etc. The more detailed verbal directions or instructions, on the contrary, are easily understood since they are clearly linked with the practical display (demonstration) of the movements, especially in the cases when children exercise on their own.

Visible progress in the linguistic skills is noticed in children of 5-6 yrs old. Among the essential factors of this progress we can mention:

- The considerable increase of the socialization and changes in their social position
- Gradual approaching to their school age (Kossakowski, Otto, 1971).

And it is logic to think that the childish vocabulary is increased ten times as compared to the first year of pre-school age, amounting to three thousand words in 6-yrs-old children. (Novogrodoski, 1969). In this context, in case the motoric assignment is clearly formulated, undoubtedly and relevant to their understanding abilities, the children are able to react according to the directions and with proper movements. Therefore, we should consider that the thinking of this group-age children remains linked with everything obvious and concrete.

The pre-school children’s motor development rhythm, generally swift, includes even the motoric behavior which is featured by a salient impulse of being active.

The pre-school-age children display an obvious need to deal with things, to move continuously and in different manners, being even more active than the previous age. The *increase in the respiratory capacity, in the need to imitate and overall, the increase of the intellectual and linguistic capacity* are very important for the *motoric development* of the children of this age.

### 3. 3. The didactic and pedagogical references

The ambiance (the hall or the classroom) in which the movements (the motoric activities) take place during teaching sessions are no more considered, nowadays, as two different spaces. Present-day proposals are given through a concise manner, with a “before” and “after” the psychomotor education session. “Before” means the preparatory work prior to the exertion of the motoric activity in the classroom, where the teacher tries, by means of the necessary didactic means, (diapositives, fiches etc.), to help children create clear and real-life models, even by defining the rules basing on the previous observations of the instructing sessions. The aim is to promote teachers to organize even more diversified briefings, with an increasing frequency and relevant to the development course.

The reason is very simple: this is the way to make children concentrate into the realization of their tasks within a shorter time. “After” means the children’s work after the exertion of the instruction session in the classroom, aiming to draw conclusions regarding what has been achieved. All the children’s groups in the pre-school institutions, take, at least, thirty minutes a day with the psychomotor education. The following chart presents the instruction time dedicated to the psychomotor education, (physical education), spent in the classroom. When the three divided components are joined again, the chart becomes a full circle of abilities anew, all linking and conforming to the children’s growth and development. The effective time spent in the course of practicing children’s abilities in the pre-school institutions is even greater, since it is known that motoric and social abilities reinforce during intermissions and free time in the school ambiances.

The relevant scientific research shows that children who play (exert) increase the functioning capacity of their organs just as the adults. If children do not find any possibility to exert when their organism is growing their functional capacity might lose forever. Children come to the kindergartens with different levels of physic and motoric development. Some of them need new experiences which would help them to orient their bodies in space, while at meantime, the others require being protagonists in displaying their abilities and strategies with their ball, in the course of the games.

Regarding the psychomotor education sessions, they should first be prepared in the classroom (presenting objectives, diapositives, discussions etc.), to go on later, in the gyms of the Physical Education and Sports (PES) and then back to the classroom again, (orienting the children’s scores, senses, incidents, experiences, etc.). Such a session, in its moments of alteration can long 50-60 minutes, out of which 25-30 minutes in the PES gym. The following is a model of alternation of the instruction sessions, during different cycles of the pre-school children development (Ardian Shingjergji, Besa Shingjergji, 2014).

**Table 1.** The time of the development cycles activities during the instruction sessions.

Groups according to the development cycles.	Precursory activities in the classroom.	Sessions in the PES Gym.	Synthesis activities in the classroom.
Group I	10-15 min	25 -30 min	5 min
Group II	12-18 min	25-30 min	8 min
Group III	15-20 min	25-30 min	10 min

Moreover, while referring to the American author K. J. Gray (trainer of the competitive gymnastics) from California, as well as international consultant for the child development, we find his description of the 45 minutes of a teaching session, (1 hour of curriculum). Preparatory activities (10-15 minutes).

- The class or a children's group form a circle with each child saying his/her name, including the teacher. (2-3 min).
- Warming-up (free exercises to warm the musculature associated with music. (7-8 min).
- Repetition of the homework (from the last lesson), (3-4 min).

Key activities (25-30 minutes).

- Singing or dancing (new activities each week), (4-5 min).
- Sportive abilities (development of the base abilities in different sports) (9-10 min).
- Discretionary games (5-7 minutes).
- Jumping, horizontal jumping, games associated with music, (7-8 min).

Activities of the Synthesis 5 minutes.

- Different games or songs (new different activities each week), (3-4 min).
- Giving homework (1-2 min).

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

**A)** In order to promote and achieve positive results in the domain of pre-school children education and physical and motoric development we should guarantee them the possible maximum of free motions and favorable conditions. This entails that both in the state education institutions and out of them (public ambiances, houses etc.) the children should have sufficient space to move and to exert with various motoric activities.

**B)** The main direction of the pre-educational teachers and specialists work in the domain of the psychomotor education is their organization, development and their directed leadership for further enrichment of the children's motoric experiences. This course is considered as an important social factor impacting the formation of the human personality and preparation during lifetime as a whole, as well as bringing children closer to the different sportive disciplines to reveal their talents, as one of the present-day inclinations.

**C)** The pre-school state educational institutions should take into consideration the children's strong needs for exercise as well as their desire to frequently change their activity. In order to educate, favor and develop the children's motoric abilities, the teachers, students and pedagogues who prepare the forthcoming teachers, should make their contribution to the further improvements of the curricula aiming to involve children into motoric activities integrated with other fields of knowledge. The children's needs and delights are fulfilled by offering them motoric activities based on the games and diversified exercises consistent to their age and development.

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( Received 15 November 2013; accepted 20 November 2013 )